**Race and class in Britain and America, 17th-19th centuries**

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**Race and class in Britain and America from the 17th to the 19th century**

22-23 March 2018

Université PARIS VIII Vincennes-St Denis/Université PARIS NANTERRE

Encounters with new populations in Africa and America during the early modern period captured the interest of European naturalists, who developed various discourses of human variety theory in view of categorising the peoples of the earth. The premise of human classification, of course, was that one group was innately and inimitably better or worse than another - and that the most superior human beings on earth happened to be the white European elite. The taxonomies of human ‘race’ that took hold over the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries in Britain and America were, and continue to be, inextricable from questions of class and social precedence.

This conference will question how developing discourses of race came to structure the societies of Britain and America in the early modern period. It hopes to explore the way discourses of race and class interacted with each other, and how the vocabulary of social strata overlapped with the language of race. How were the bodies and minds of the upper ranks considered to differ from those of other people during these periods? How important indeed was the idea of the physical body in rank distinction, and how did this square with the notions of pure blood that underpinned both ‘race’ and hereditary privilege? In what ways were some groups ‘naturally’ privileged or ‘naturally’ excluded? Were social minorities like indigents or women marginalized or stigmatized similarly to Africans or Native Americans?

We will welcome proposals offering a comparative approach between British and American societies as well as a diachronic approach.

Proposals for papers might include:

- Studies of genealogy and family hierarchy
- Human variety theory in philosophy and naturalism
- Medical and scientific views on heredity and human hierarchy
• The evolution of racial discourses
• Biological justifications of slavery
• Heredity and the patrilineal transmission of nobility
• Inquiries into the human body and its representations
• Representations of race and class in literature and art
• Representations of the African or the Native American in Europe
• Class and racial solidarity
• Racialised representations of the indigent and the noble
• The perception of the physical ideal and miscegenation
• Race and nation: Anglo-Saxon ethnic/racial superiority
• Race and the environment: the degeneration of American settlers vs the superiority of the “American race”
• Studies of femininity, femaleness and ‘effeminacy’ in the context of race and rank

The conference will consider proposals from all fields of study, and welcomes both confirmed researchers and doctoral or post-doctoral students.

The languages of the conference will be French and English.

A selection of papers presented at the conference will be published.

For consideration, please submit a paper proposal of 300 words and a one-page CV by September 30, 2017 to Anne-Claire Faucquez anneclaire.merlin-faucquez@univ-paris8.fr, Tim Mc Inerney tim.mc-inerney@univ-paris8.fr and Michaël Roy michael.roy@u-paris10.fr

Organisation committee:

Anne-Claire Faucquez, Université Paris VIII, Vincennes-St Denis, TransCrits.

Tim Mc Inerney, Université Paris VIII, Vincennes-St Denis, TransCrits.

Michaël Roy, Université Paris Nanterre, CREA.

Select bibliography:


Chaplin, Joyce E. Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American


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